

A Source of Joy

Isaiah 55:10-13

Today's message is the last of a three-part series from Isaiah, chapter 55, called, "God, Our Source." Two weeks ago, we were reminded that "There is a Source." Last week, we saw that "God is our Source," and today we learn that "His Word is our Joy."

On the question of "Source." Where do you satisfy your desires? What are you thirsting for? And what will you be taking into eternity?

As to the issue of God being your source, what is God like? We have seen that He is near. He is not like anything else we've ever seen or known, but He invites us to be transformed into the image of His Son, Jesus.

Today we learn that one way, in part, of how that transformation happens is through the Word.

In the summer of 1988 Gregory Patton found himself temporarily assigned to Camp Pendelton, California Marine Corps Base. He'd requested to go to search and rescue school and he had gotten his wish.

About midway through the eight-week training his commanding officer told them that all available search and rescue personnel – including students – were being requested to be sent to nearby 29 Palms California Marine Corps Base. It seemed that one of their staff had turned up missing and they wanted them to come and help in the search effort. At first they were all excited. After all, they were barely halfway through the training program and they were already being called upon to put what they were learning to the test. But their excitement soon turned to sadness as they discovered that the person they were looking for had already been missing for nearly three weeks.

The military bureaucracy had fouled up again. A young eighteen-year-old marine was left out in the middle of a training field late on Friday night. Nobody had bothered to have a roll call that night because it was already late, so nobody knew he was missing. When Monday morning rolled around the private was reported as being UA – unauthorized absence. His buddies immediately reported that he had not been seen since the training assignment and that he might still be lost on the base. Three days later the Marine Corps recorded him AWOL – absent without leave. Two weeks later and only after the young private's parents and friends pleaded with the Marine Corps- the search for the young man began. After a week of trying in vain on their own, they called in search and rescue.

They were all gravely disappointed, because they knew they were no longer looking for a live body. You see, 29 Palms is a Marine Corps Air and Ground Combat Centre located in the heart of the Mojave Desert. The average daytime temp in the summer is 120°. Chances of surviving just a few hours without water were slim. Adding to the difficulty was the fact that 29 Palms is a huge base. Knowing that he had been missing for three weeks only worsened the situation.

For two weeks twenty-five aircraft searched the base in an organized grid pattern. On their second week there their commander told us if they didn't find the marine by the end of the day the search would be called off. Late in the afternoon a call came over his headphones – the young marine's body had been found. Their commander wanted all the students to the site to witness how a recovery was performed. As their helicopter flew to the site he noticed they landed just on the other side of a small lake. Near the lake was a small building. Gregory later found out that the lake contained a fresh water spring that fed water to the entire base. The building was a pump station that contained a telephone and, was never locked. From the spot where the helicopter landed, where the young marine lay dead, all of this was hidden.

It was a great tragedy that a young eighteen-year-old man lay dead. But an, even greater tragedy was that this young marine had died from dehydration and heat exhaustion just three hundred yards from life giving water, shelter and a phone and he never knew any of it was there within his reach.

Today's verses, from 10-13 of Isaiah 55 describe just such a situation for mankind. People who are dying without God are doing so, not because of a lack of opportunity for salvation, but from a lack of knowledge about God's saving grace. As our text shows us, God's Word ...

Always Effective (vv. 10-11)

Brings Forth Praise (v. 12), and...

Eternal Transformation (v. 13)

I. Body

A. God's Effective Word (vv. 10-11)

a) **God says, "Git 'er done!"**

1. The Water Cycle

- a) comes from the clouds in heaven
- b) waters - "inebriates" makes drunk
- c) reaches the seed that was sown
- d) produces a harvest

2. As God's Word

- a) Isaiah 40:6-8 -- The voice said, "Cry out!"
And he said, "What shall I cry?"
"All flesh is grass,
And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
Surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever."
 - b) from Heaven
 - c) shall produce results
 - (1) God's Word softens the hard, barren hearts of men
 - (2) and makes them fruitful
 - d) as God wills

3. the Holy Land after a rainstorm, dry ground can seemingly sprout vegetation overnight. Isaiah used rain's renewal to illustrate God's refreshing Word. The Word of God waters our souls and brings blessing and fruitfulness to us. The change that the Holy Scriptures bring to human life and human destiny is glorious beyond compare. Scripture carries spiritual vitality. That's why it doesn't, return void.

- 4. The Bible is to a thirsty soul what water is to a barren land. Wherever it encounters an open heart, it brings refreshment, nourishment, and new life.
- 5. God's Word is like refreshing rain that waters crops and seed;
- 6. It brings new life to open hearts, and meets us in our need.

7. Satan sells umbrellas

a) Acts 24:24-25 -- And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

b) Or, if the Word is likened to seeds, Satan is a bird --
Matthew 13:3-9

(1) Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

B. (God's Word) Brings Forth Praise (v. 12)

a) **Guaranteed Joy!**

1. A New Exodus

- a) Isaiah 40:11 -- He will feed His flock like a shepherd;
He will gather the lambs with His arm,
And carry them in His bosom,
And gently lead those who are with young

2. The leading of God's Spirit

- a) out from sin and self-justification
b) to the joy and peace of Christ's salvation
c) All creation awaits
d) Rom 8:18-22 -- For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

3. Illustration: Letter from Sandra of South Carolina

- a) Dear Gideons,
b) I thank God for your organization. I was addicted to crack cocaine for eight years. My two-year old daughter and I were living in a house owned by a crack dealer when I finally became weary, sick, and tired of my life of drugs. I had lost faith and hope in the human race due to all the ugly things I had experienced. I took my daughter and spent four days and nights in a motel, and found your Gideon Bible. As I read that Bible, I gained strength to say no to the drugs and make changes in my life. By the grace of God, I have become a Christian and a witness for God. I have quit using drugs, and God has blessed my life so much since I turned it over to Him. Thank you for making God's Word available to people when they need it most.

4. The procession of God's ministers

- a) going out with joy and peace
b) to the rulers (mountains) and the people (trees)

C. (God's Word Causes) Eternal Transformation (v. 13)

a) **There is a promise lasts forever.**

1. Evidence of the curse

- a) thorns and briers
- b) 2 Sam. 23:6 -- But the sons of rebellion shall all be as thorns thrust away...
- c) their end is to be burnt up

2. A transformation

- a) cypress and myrtel
- b) Psalm 92:12-14 -- The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,

He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Those who are planted in the house of the LORD

Shall flourish in the courts of our God.

They shall still bear fruit in old age;

They shall be fresh and flourishing

3. One of the most dramatic examples of the Bible's divine ability to transform men and women involved the famous mutiny on the "Bounty." Following their rebellion against the notorious Captain Bligh, nine mutineers, along with the Tahitian men and women who accompanied them, found their way to Pitcairn Island, a tiny dot in the South Pacific only two miles long and a mile wide. Ten years later, drink and fighting had left only one man alive--John Adams. Eleven women and 23 children made up the rest of the Island's population. So far this is the familiar story made famous in the book and motion picture. But the rest of the story is even more remarkable. About this time, Adams came across the "Bounty's" Bible in the bottom of an old chest. He began to read it, and the divine power of God's Word reached into the heart of that hardened murderer on a tiny volcanic speck in the vast Pacific Ocean--and changed his life forever. The peace and love that Adams found in the Bible entirely replaced the old life of quarreling, brawling, and liquor. He began to teach the children from the Bible until every person on the island had experienced the same amazing change that he had found. Today, with a population of slightly less than 100, nearly every person on Pitcairn Island is a Christian.

4. Forever

- a) perpetual
- b) not to ever be cut off

II. Conclusion

- A. Remember the call that is going out to this age, before eternity, is for all of us to seek the Lord while He may be found.
- B. One sure way to seek Him is through His Word.
- C. If you draw near to His Word, It will have an effect upon you.
- D. God's Word can change human life. In the FIJI ISLANDS an islander was reading God's Book. A Frenchman, watching him, finally came over and said, "So you are reading the Bible!" The Frenchman ridiculed the islander.
- E. The islander turned to the Frenchman and said, "Do you see that boiling pot over there? Were it not for this Book, you would be in that pot!" What a glorious change the Word of God makes in human life!
- F. The Word
 - 1. softens hardened hearts
 - 2. brings forth a heavenly harvest
 - 3. produces the fruits of the Spirit
- G. As a result of God's Word, All creation praises
 - 1. the new exodus
 - 2. the leading of God's Spirit
 - 3. the procession of God's ministers
- H. The result is Eternal Transformation
 - 1. results of the curse are gone
 - 2. replaced by fruitfulness
 - 3. a perpetual witness to God's glory.
- I. Don't allow yourself, or anyone else that you may know, to perish for lack of the Word of Truth, when God's Word, like the rain and snow, is so abundantly available today.